

## [P. L. Cowan]

1

Beliefs and customs - Occupational lore

Range-lore

Annie McAulay

Maverick, Texas

FEC

Page one

### RANGE-LORE

P. L. Cowan, now a resident of Runnels County, was born near Belton, Bell County, Texas, December 18, 1886. He tells the following story:

"I learned to ride a horse when I was very young. My older brother taught me how to ride and also how to work with cattle. My father being a freighter, owned sever wagons and teams. In the early days he used ox teams and later, mules , to freight with. Freight was hauled from points east to Fort Conch Concho . On some of these trips they encountered bands of Indians and they were not always friendly toward the whites. One group killed one of father's oxen. The freighters went in groups and were well armed, as they were in danger of encounters with robbers as well as Indians, at all times.

"In 1879 my father moved his herd from Bell County to Llano County and sent my brother and I to look after the cattle. C12 - [???] - Texas 2 We worked there several years and I got some real experience which I needed.

## Library of Congress

"In 1882, while there, we had a pretty bad stampede. My brother and I and two hired punchers were holding about seven or eight hundred steers on the banks of the Colorado river, where there had been an old field, the fence still being good on two sides. There had been a lot of rain and the river was on a big rise. The cattle seemed restless and along came an old mule, stopping near where the cattle were bedded down and hee-hawing for all he was worth. We had been holding the cattle there for three or four days, waiting for the river to go down and they were getting nervous and so were we. When that mule made his appearance the cattle began running, and we began riding. We stayed with them and when daylight came we were four miles from home, but still had our herd, and the next day we crossed the river and delivered every one of them.

"In 1887 I helped to drive a herd of 3,300 head for Joe Mitchell of Bell County to Abilene, Kansas, starting from his Bell County ranch. There were about twenty men in the outfit. We traveled almost due north and crossed the Red River at Doans Store near Vernon. We didn't have any trouble on this drive but we got somewhat excited when we [??] were passing through the northern part of Oklahoma and had to witness an Indian funeral. They had sewed the dead Indian up in a buffalo hide and swung him to a limb, high up in a tree. That was the way the Cheyenne tribe buried, or disposed of their dead. 3 "The best bronc buster I ever knew was Iky Stevens. He could ride anything. I saw Booger Red thrown off of a heathenish horse - Booger was a good rider, too - but Iky was watching and saw him when he got thrown and he said he would ride that filly for a dollar. And he did. He rode him as clean as I ever saw one rode.

"The Indians killed my grandfather on the Colorado river, near Wolf Crossing. It happened just before the Pack Saddle fight. He was on horseback, alone , and they shot arrows into his back. He kept riding, but died soon after reaching home. My mother said they would sneak up to the spring and steal her milk and butter from the milk house. Mother had a bulldog and a gun for protection against the Redskins, when grandfather was away from home. When I was about four years old, they stole some horses from a thicket where my

## Library of Congress

father had them tied. Of course father and a group of men followed them but they [?] did not recover any of the horses.

"I am now too old to ride the range or work with cattle in any way, but I still think the old days on the range were the best I ever had."

\*\*\*\*\*

### REFERENCES

Personal interview with P. L. Cowan, who told the story. 1 Folk Stuff - Range lore

Range-lore

Annie McAulay

Maverick, Texas

Page one Duplicate

### RANGE-LORE

P. L. Cowan, now a resident of Runnels County, was born near Belton, Bell County, Texas, December 18, 1886. He tells the following story:

"I learned to ride a horse when I was very young. My older brother taught me how to ride and also how to work with cattle. My father being a freighter, owned several wagons and teams. In the early days he used ox teams but later he used mules to freight with. Freight was hauled from points east to Fort Concho. On some of these trips they encountered bands of Indians, some of whom were not friendly toward the whites. One group killed one of father's oxen. They freighters went in groups and were well armed, as they were in danger of encounters with robbers, as well as Indians, at all times.

## Library of Congress

"In 1879 my father moved his herd from Bell County to Llano County and sent my brother and I to look after the cattle. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 We worked there several years and I got some real experience which I needed.

"In 1882, while there, we had a pretty bad stampede. My brother and I and two hired punchers were holding about seven or eight hundred steers on the banks of the Colorado river, where there had been an old field, the fence still being good on two sides. There had been a lot of rain and the river was on a big rise. The cattle seemed restless and along came an old mule, stopping near where the cattle were bedded down. He was hee-hawing for all he was worth. We had been holding the cattle there for three or four days, waiting for the river to go down and they were getting nervous and so were we. When that mule made his appearance the cattle began running, and we began riding. We stayed with them and when daylight came we were four miles from home, but still had our herd, and the next day we crossed the river and delivered every one of them.

"In 1887 I helped to drive a herd of 3,300 head for Joe Mitchell of Bell County to Abilene, Kansas, starting from his Bell County ranch. There were about twenty men in the outfit. We traveled almost due north and crossed the Red River at Doans Store near Vernon. We didn't have any trouble on this drive but we got somewhat excited when we were passing through the northern part of Oklahoma and had to witness an Indian funeral. They had sewed the dead Indian up in a buffalo hide and swung him to a limb, high up in a tree. That was the way the Cheyenne tribe buried, or disposed of their dead. 3 "The best bronc buster I ever knew was Iky Stevens. He could ride anything. I saw Booger Red thrown off of a heathenish horse - Booger was a good rider, too - but Iky was watching and saw him when he got thrown and he said he would ride that filly for a dollar. And he did. He rode the best I ever saw.

"The Indians killed my grandfather on the Colorado river, near Wolf Crossing. It happened just before the Pack Saddle fight. He was on horseback, alone, and they shot arrows into his back. He kept riding, but died soon after reaching home. My mother said they would

## Library of Congress

sneak up to the spring and steal her milk and butter from the milk house. Mother had a bulldog and a gun for protection against the Redskins, when father was away from home. When I was about four years old they stole some horses from a thicket where my father had tied them. Of course father and a group of men followed them, but they didn't recover any of the horses.

"I am now too old to ride the range or work with cattle in any way, but I still think the old days on the range were the best I ever had."

\*\*\*\*\*

## REFERENCES

Personal interview with P. L. Cowan, who told the story.